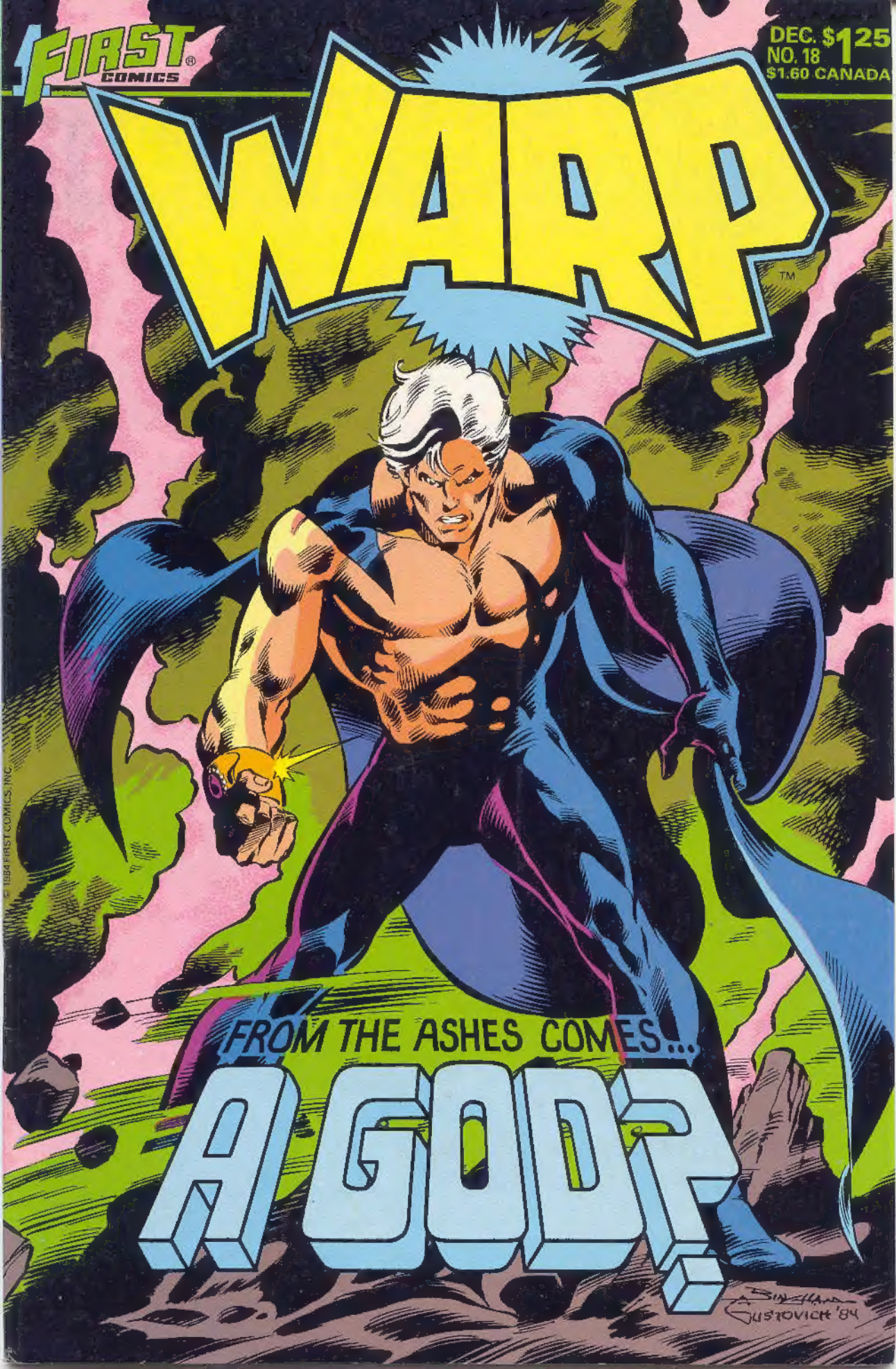
FIRST COMICS
DEC. $1.25
NO. 18
$1.60 CANADA
WARP
™
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FROM THE ASHES COMES...
A GOD!
Bisley
Gustovich '84

warped words

%FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Dear Mike:

I have read every issue of Warp so far published. Of them all, the latest issue (Warp #15) was the most fun. This was the first time that Peter Gillis's writing ability eclipsed the fine art of Bingham/Gustovich. I don't mean eclipsed in the sense that the story was better than the art; I mean in the sense that I didn't notice the quality of the art until I reread the issue.

The only problem I can see with Warp is the back-up feature: Outrider. I want full-length stories in Warp.

J. Alexander Hall
1802 E. Elm
Enid, OK 73701

Well, you forced us into it, J. Alexander. Beginning with this issue, each and every issue of **Warp** *will be a full 28 pages with no back-up. How's that?*

Dear Editor:

While the main part of the lead story in Warp #14 concerned the Wizards' battle for survival and while the battle had its interesting twists and turns, the highlight of the story to me was the poignant scene between David and Mary Louise. It is nice to see comic book lovers trying to deal with serious emotional and practical difficulties without flying off the handle at one another. I think that one thing the scene demonstrates well is that a man and a woman often are drawn to one another not only for what each one is but also for what each one is not. Many may say that true love does not want to limit the other and this may be so, but then how many loves are truly true?

T.M. Maple
Box 1272, Station B
Weston, Ontario M9L 2R9

Good question, T.M. And while we're at it, what is reality?

Gentlemen:

Warp #15 was really interesting and was the best issue to date. I've never seen a fight scene like the one between Lord Cumulus and Tanz. I've been collecting Warp since issue #1 and as of yet have never been disappointed.

Tony Hartgrove
728 Goldfloss St.
Winston-Salem, NC 27107

Dear Rick:

Warp #15 featured the closest thing to the old cliched "Hero vs. Villain" that this book will ever see. And you know what? I kinda like it ... for a change.

There's something about Jerry Bingham's art that seems to make any and all fight scenes ... *special*. Not once was I bored with it, and there were a couple of times I was almost on the edge of my seat.

I actually "got into" the story as I did with the art. Hopefully, this trend will keep with this book for the next few issues ... and beyond.

As for Outrider, I'm liking this series more with every installment. And the art by Bill Willingham and Hilary Barta didn't hurt it in the least! Matter of fact, I wouldn't mind seeing Willingham do a regular series for First (hint, hint).

Kevin T. Brown
7846F W. Lawrence Ave.
Norridge, IL 60656

The last we heard, the talented Mr. Willingham was planning to do his own creation/series — The Elementals — for Comico. As much as I hate to plug another company, you might want to check it out. Of course, you could also go out and buy 100 copies of **Warp** *#16 which features 28 pages of* **Bill Willingham** *pencils.*

Dear Mike:

Are we actually supposed to learn the names of all of the wizards of Fen-Ra? Are we ever going to find out what evil force is trying to take over the eternal city? Why did Valeria kill her parents? Will Sargon ever reveal the secrets of He Who Dreams to our hero? And will we ever get translations of the Swahili chants of which Lugulbanda is so fond?

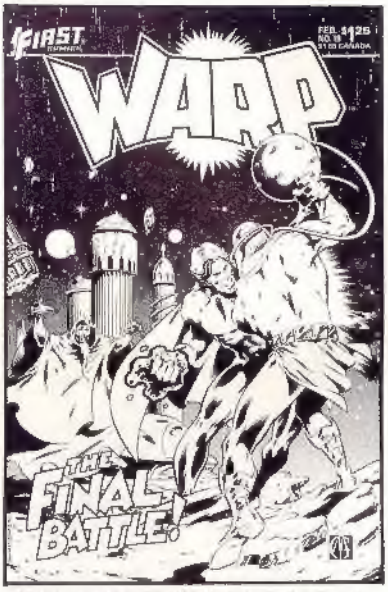
Kevin J. Maroney
409 Landerwood
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

No. Possibly. I'm not telling. Maybe. Only if we find someone who actually speaks Swahili — Peter won't tell us.

My Good Warped Fellows:

Warp the comic — good writing, good drawing, good inking, goodnight.

Goodman Goodbody
Box 1610
3990 5th Ave.
Pittsburg, PA 15213



NEXT ISSUE: You'll have to wait two months to find out what happens next, but you won't be disappointed! Cumulus has plans of Chaos — and for everybody else for that matter. The Protector of Fen-Ra gathers all the remaining heroes in the eternal city for a confrontation with the very force that rules the cosmos. What will happen in the final conflagration? Find out in **Warp** #19! On sale in November.

— Rick Oliver

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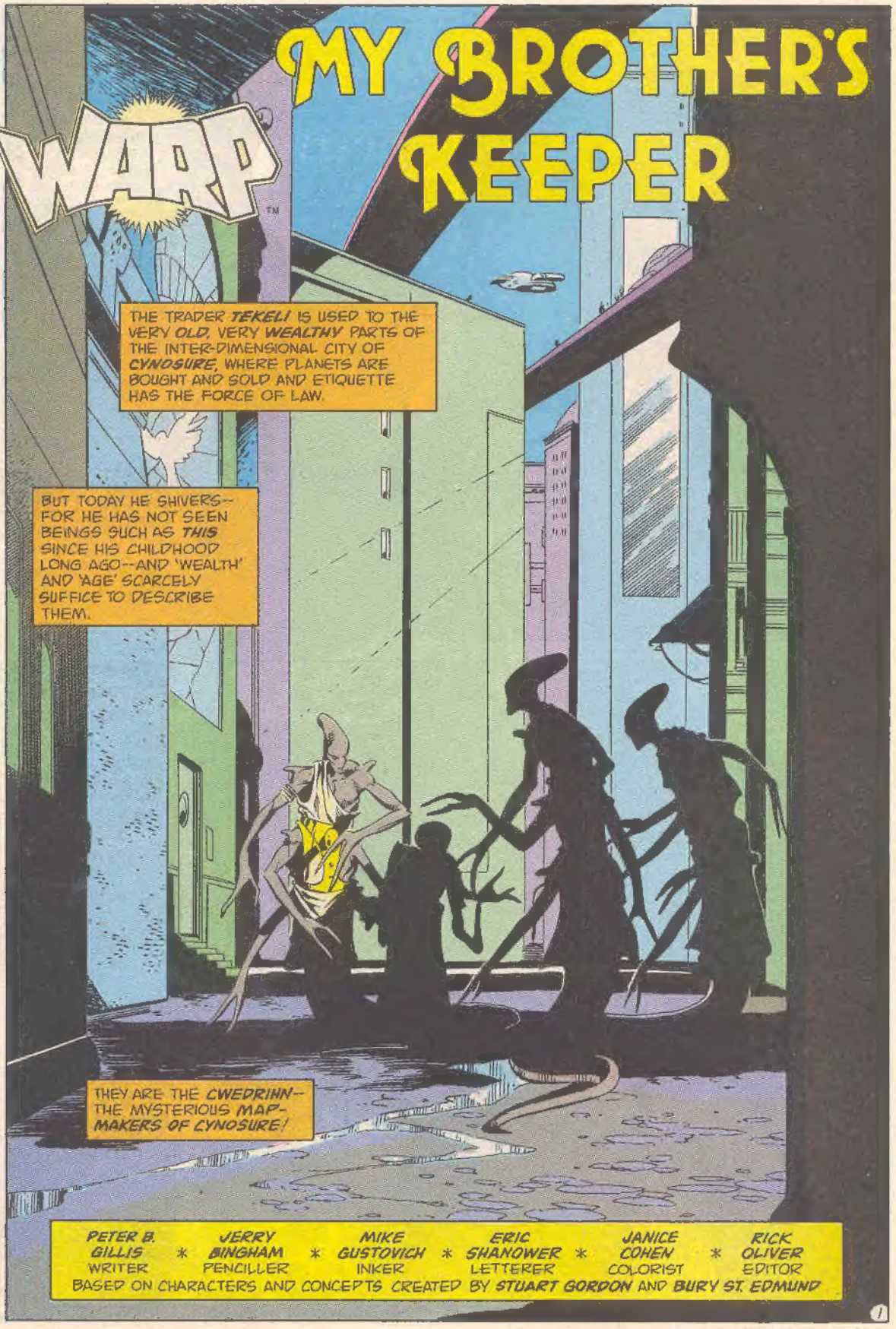
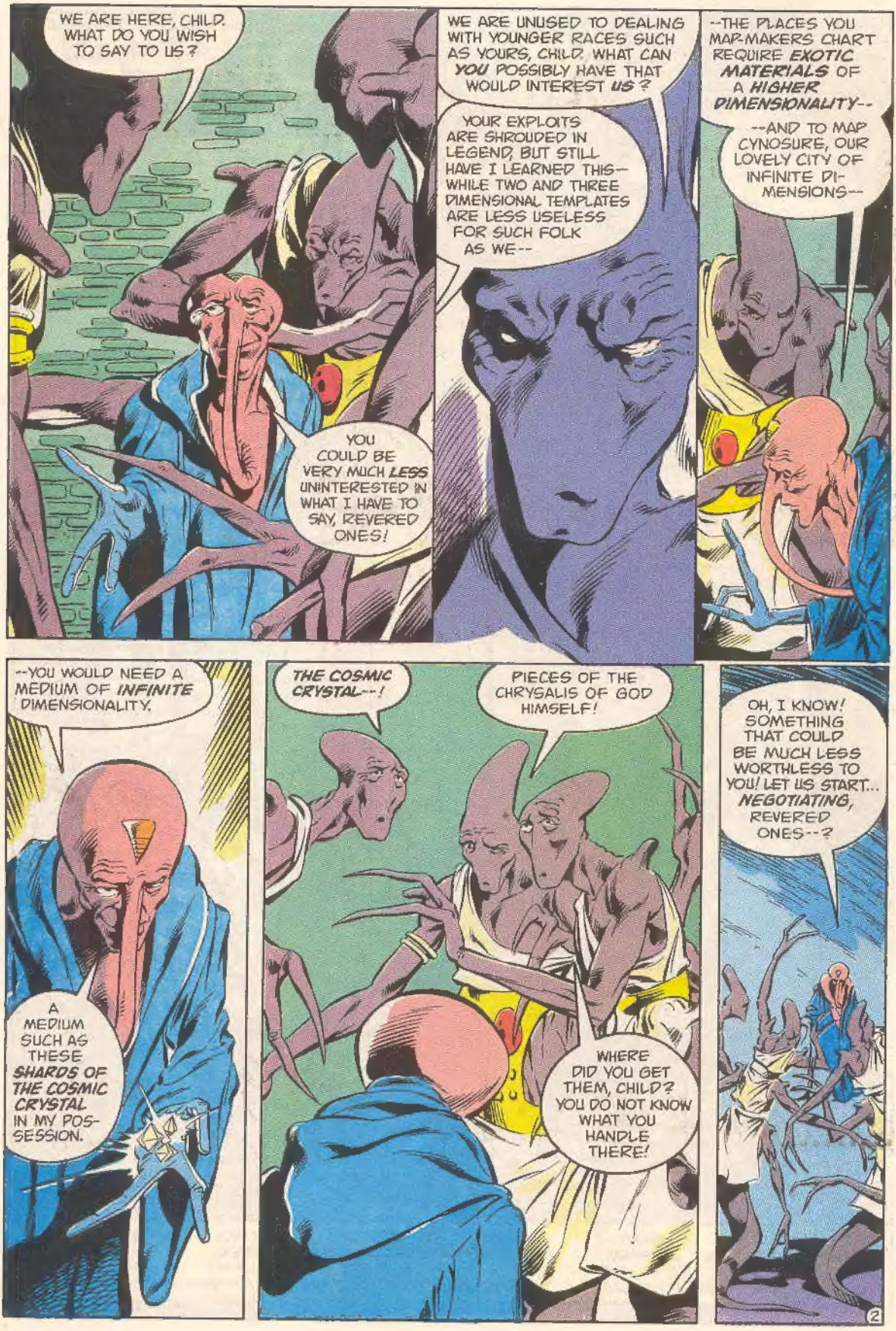
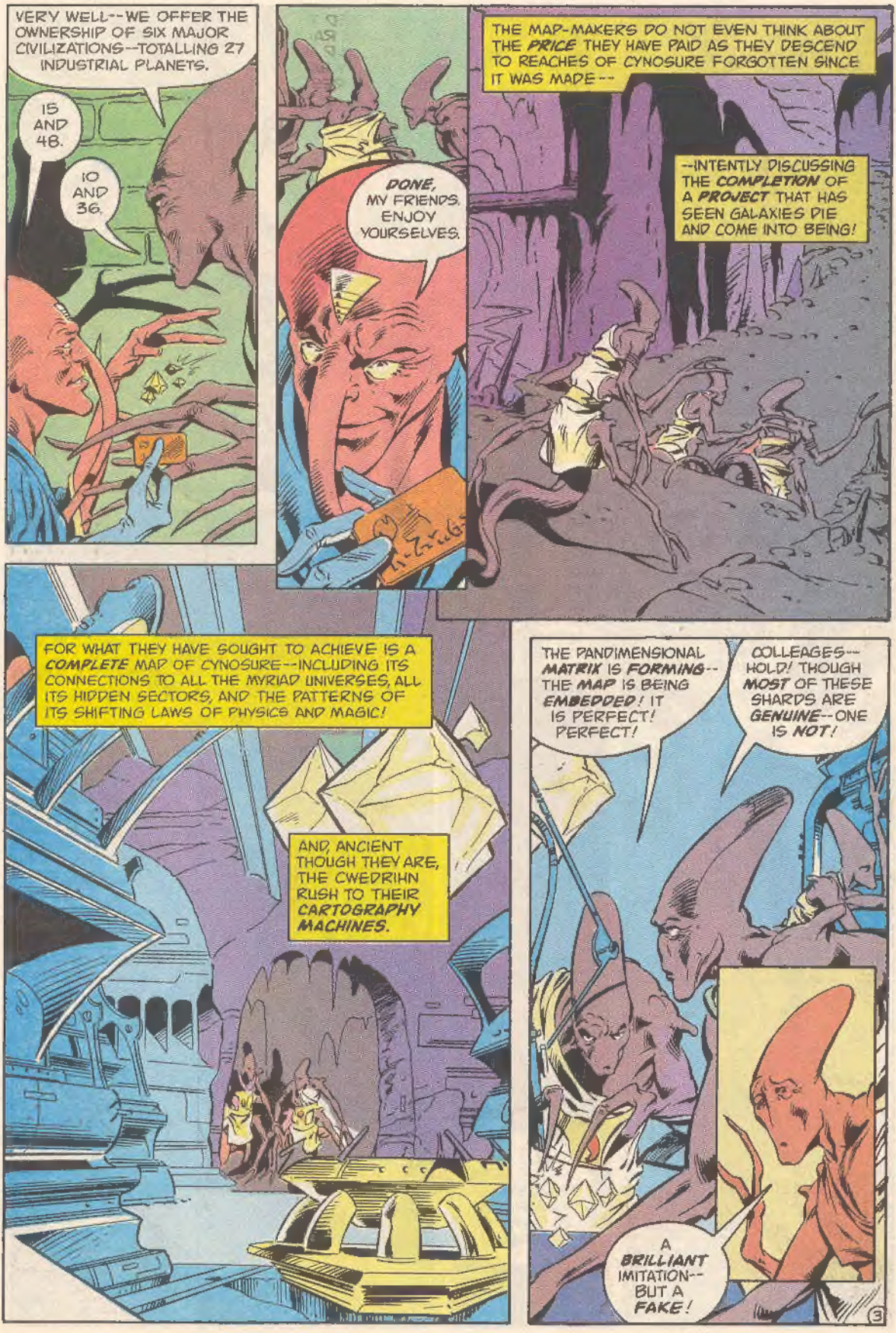
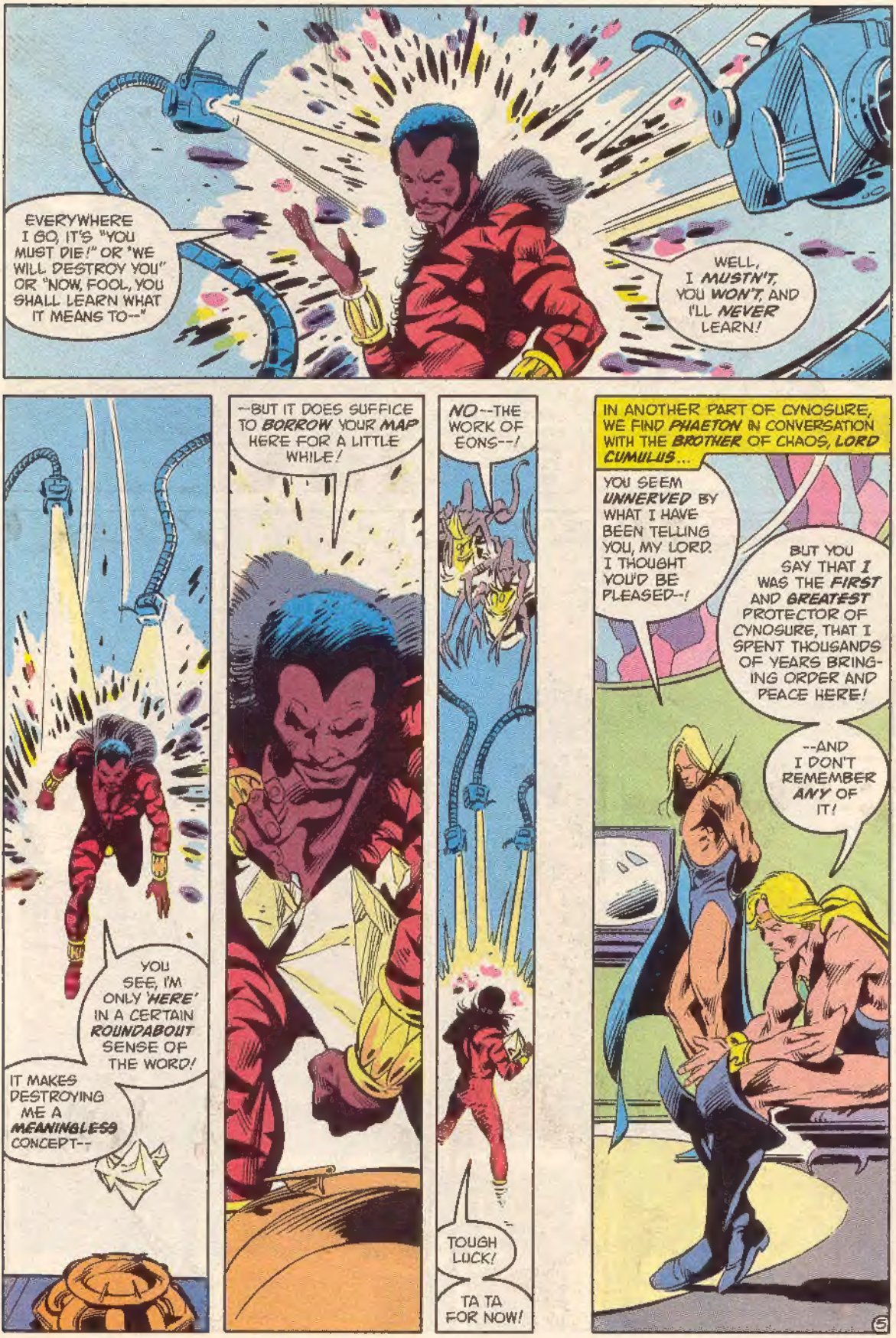
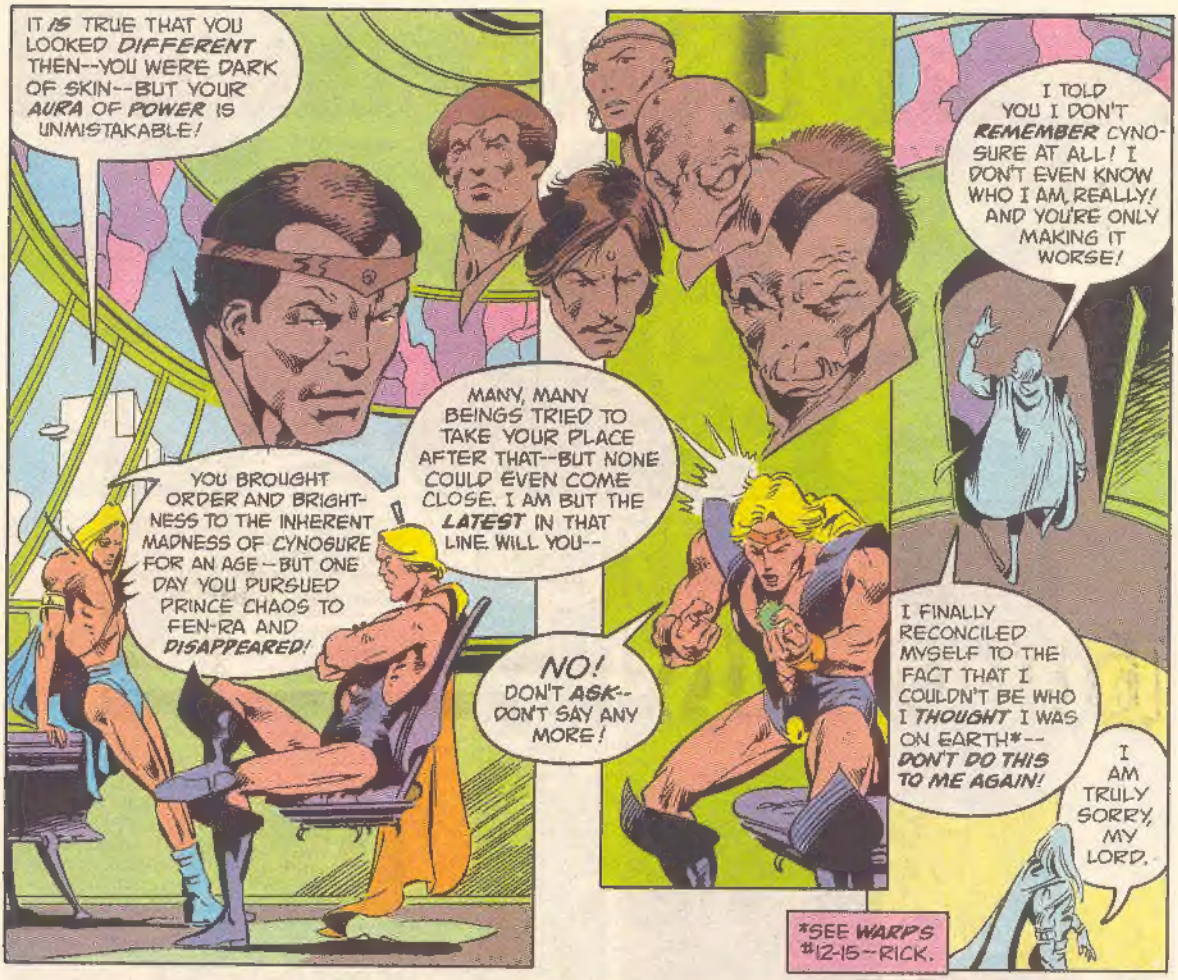

WARP
MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
THE TRADER TEKELI IS USED TO THE VERY OLD, VERY WEALTHY PARTS OF THE INTER-DIMENSIONAL CITY OF CYNOSURE, WHERE PLANETS ARE BOUGHT AND SOLD AND ETIQUETTE HAS THE FORCE OF LAW.
BUT TODAY HE SHIVERS--FOR HE HAS NOT SEEN BEINGS SUCH AS THIS SINCE HIS CHILDHOOD LONG AGO--AND 'WEALTH' AND 'AGE' SCARCELY SUFFICE TO DESCRIBE THEM.
THEY ARE THE CWEDRIHN--THE MYSTERIOUS MAP-MAKERS OF CYNOSURE!
PETER B. GILLIS WRITER * JERRY BINGHAM PENCILLER * MIKE GUSTOVICH INKER * ERIC SHANOWER LETTERER * JANICE COHEN COLORIST * RICK OLIVER EDITOR
BASED ON CHARACTERS AND CONCEPTS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND


WE ARE HERE, CHILD. WHAT DO YOU WISH TO SAY TO US?
YOU COULD BE VERY MUCH LESS UNINTERESTED IN WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, REVERED ONES!
WE ARE UNUSED TO DEALING WITH YOUNGER RACES SUCH AS YOURS, CHILD. WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY HAVE THAT WOULD INTEREST US?
YOUR EXPLOITS ARE SHROUDED IN LEGEND, BUT STILL HAVE I LEARNED THIS-- WHILE TWO AND THREE DIMENSIONAL TEMPLATES ARE LESS USELESS FOR SUCH FOLK AS WE--
--THE PLACES YOU MAP-MAKERS CHART REQUIRE EXOTIC MATERIALS OF A HIGHER DIMENSIONALITY--
--AND TO MAP CYNOSURE, OUR LOVELY CITY OF INFINITE DI-MENSIONS--
--YOU WOULD NEED A MEDIUM OF INFINITE DIMENSIONALITY.
A MEDIUM SUCH AS THESE SHARDS OF THE COSMIC CRYSTAL IN MY POS-SESSION.
THE COSMIC CRYSTAL---!
PIECES OF THE CHRYSALIS OF GOD HIMSELF!
WHERE DID YOU GET THEM, CHILD? YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU HANDLE THERE!
OH, I KNOW! SOMETHING THAT COULD BE MUCH LESS WORTHLESS TO YOU! LET US START... NEGOTIATING, REVERED ONES--?
2


VERY WELL--WE OFFER THE OWNERSHIP OF SIX MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS--TOTALLING 27 INDUSTRIAL PLANETS.
15 AND 48.
10 AND 36.
DONE, MY FRIENDS. ENJOY YOURSELVES.
THE MAP-MAKERS DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT THE PRICE THEY HAVE PAID AS THEY DESCEND TO REACHES OF CYNOSURE FORGOTTEN SINCE IT WAS MADE--
--INTENTLY DISCUSSING THE COMPLETION OF A PROJECT THAT HAS SEEN GALAXIES DIE AND COME INTO BEING!
FOR WHAT THEY HAVE SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE IS A COMPLETE MAP OF CYNOSURE--INCLUDING ITS CONNECTIONS TO ALL THE MYRIAD UNIVERSES, ALL ITS HIDDEN SECTORS, AND THE PATTERNS OF ITS SHIFTING LAWS OF PHYSICS AND MAGIC!
AND, ANCIENT THOUGH THEY ARE, THE CWEDRIHN RUSH TO THEIR CARTOGRAPHY MACHINES.
THE PANDIMENSIONAL MATRIX IS FORMING-- THE MAP IS BEING EMBEDDED! IT IS PERFECT! PERFECT!
COLLEAGES--- HOLD! THOUGH MOST OF THESE SHARDS ARE GENUINE--ONE IS NOT!
A BRILLIANT IMITATION-- BUT A FAKE!
3

THE PRICE FOR THE REMAINING SHARDS IS STILL A BARGAIN AT TWICE THE PRICE!
THE MONEY DOES NOT WORRY ME--
--IT IS THE NATURE OF THE FAKE CRYSTAL--IT SEEMS TO BE A DELICATE AND SOPHISTICATED--
PROTECT YOURSELVES! WHAT IS HAPPENING?
YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY 'TELEPORTATION DEVICE', WEREN'T YOU? 'FESS UP, NOW!
GREETINGS, CWEDRIHN! MY NAME IS CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS!
CHAOS! SON OF HE WHO DREAMS!
THE SAME! I KNEW TEKELI WOULD SELL THE SHARDS TO YOU--WHO ELSE COULD FIND A PROPER USE FOR THEM, LET ALONE AFFORD THEM?
AND MY LITTLE PLOY PENETRATED YOUR INCREDIBLE VEIL OF SECRECY!
YOU SEE, YOUR DATA BANKS CONTAIN A FEW ITEMS I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO READ--!
NEVER! YOU CANNOT READ OUR NOTES! KNOWLEDGE IS THE ONLY TRUE POWER--AND WE WILL DESTROY YOU TO KEEP IT!


EVERYWHERE I GO, IT'S "YOU MUST DIE!" OR "WE WILL DESTROY YOU" OR "NOW, FOOL, YOU SHALL LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO--"
WELL, I MUSTN'T, YOU WON'T, AND I'LL NEVER LEARN!
YOU SEE, I'M ONLY 'HERE' IN A CERTAIN ROUNDABOUT SENSE OF THE WORD!
IT MAKES DESTROYING ME A MEANINGLESS CONCEPT--
--BUT IT DOES SUFFICE TO BORROW YOUR MAP HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE!
NO--THE WORK OF EONS--!
TOUGH LUCK!
TA TA FOR NOW!
IN ANOTHER PART OF CYNOSURE, WE FIND PHAETON IN CONVERSATION WITH THE BROTHER OF CHAOS, LORD CUMULUS...
YOU SEEM UNNERVED BY WHAT I HAVE BEEN TELLING YOU, MY LORD. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE PLEASED--!
BUT YOU SAY THAT I WAS THE FIRST AND GREATEST PROTECTOR OF CYNOSURE, THAT I SPENT THOUSANDS OF YEARS BRINGING ORDER AND PEACE HERE!
--AND I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF IT!
5


IT IS TRUE THAT YOU LOOKED DIFFERENT THEN--YOU WERE DARK OF SKIN--BUT YOUR AURA OF POWER IS UNMISTAKABLE!
YOU BROUGHT ORDER AND BRIGHTNESS TO THE INHERENT MADNESS OF CYNOSURE FOR AN AGE--BUT ONE DAY YOU PURSUED PRINCE CHAOS TO FEN-RA AND DISAPPEARED!
MANY, MANY BEINGS TRIED TO TAKE YOUR PLACE AFTER THAT--BUT NONE COULD EVEN COME CLOSE. I AM BUT THE LATEST IN THAT LINE. WILL YOU--
NO! DON'T ASK--DON'T SAY ANY MORE!
I TOLD YOU I DON'T REMEMBER CYNOSURE AT ALL! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM, REALLY! AND YOU'RE ONLY MAKING IT WORSE!
I FINALLY RECONCILED MYSELF TO THE FACT THAT I COULDN'T BE WHO I THOUGHT I WAS ON EARTH*--DON'T DO THIS TO ME AGAIN!
I AM TRULY SORRY, MY LORD.
*SEE WARPS #12-15--RICK.

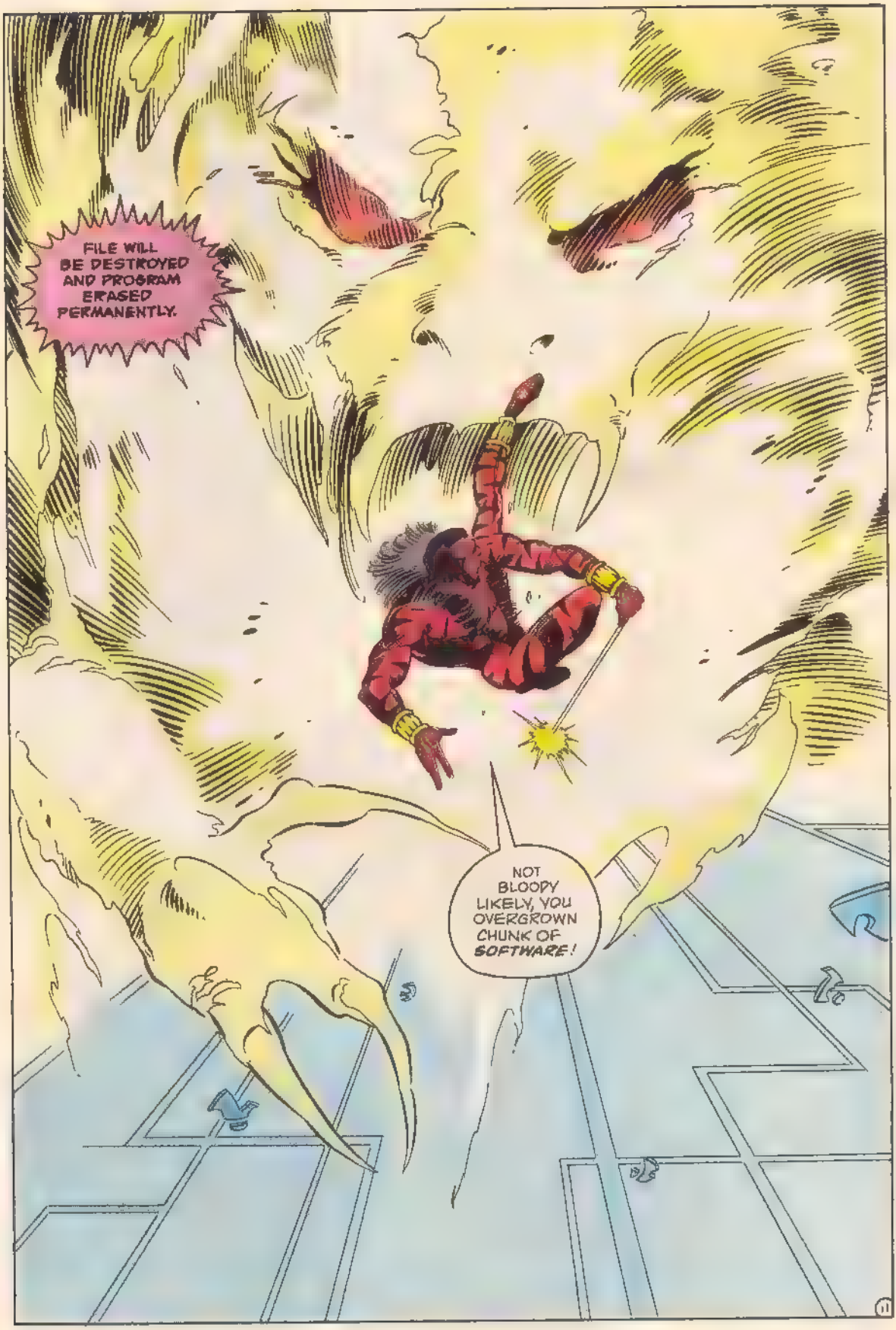
THIS IS NUTS! EVERYWHERE I GO--IN THE UNIVERSE OR OUT OF IT, IT SEEMS--
BY THE GREAT HORN SPOON!
--EVERYONE I MEET TELLS ME I'M SOMEONE I'M NOT! IT CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS! IT CAN'T!
I'M LORD CUMULUS--WITH POWER BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS! AND YET I DON'T HAVE WHAT THAT DULL BANK TELLER IN CENTRAL CITY HAD--
--AN IDENTITY. ALL I'VE GOT IS COSMIC LUNACY!
OVER THERE--IT LOOKS LIKE--
CHAOS! BROTHER!

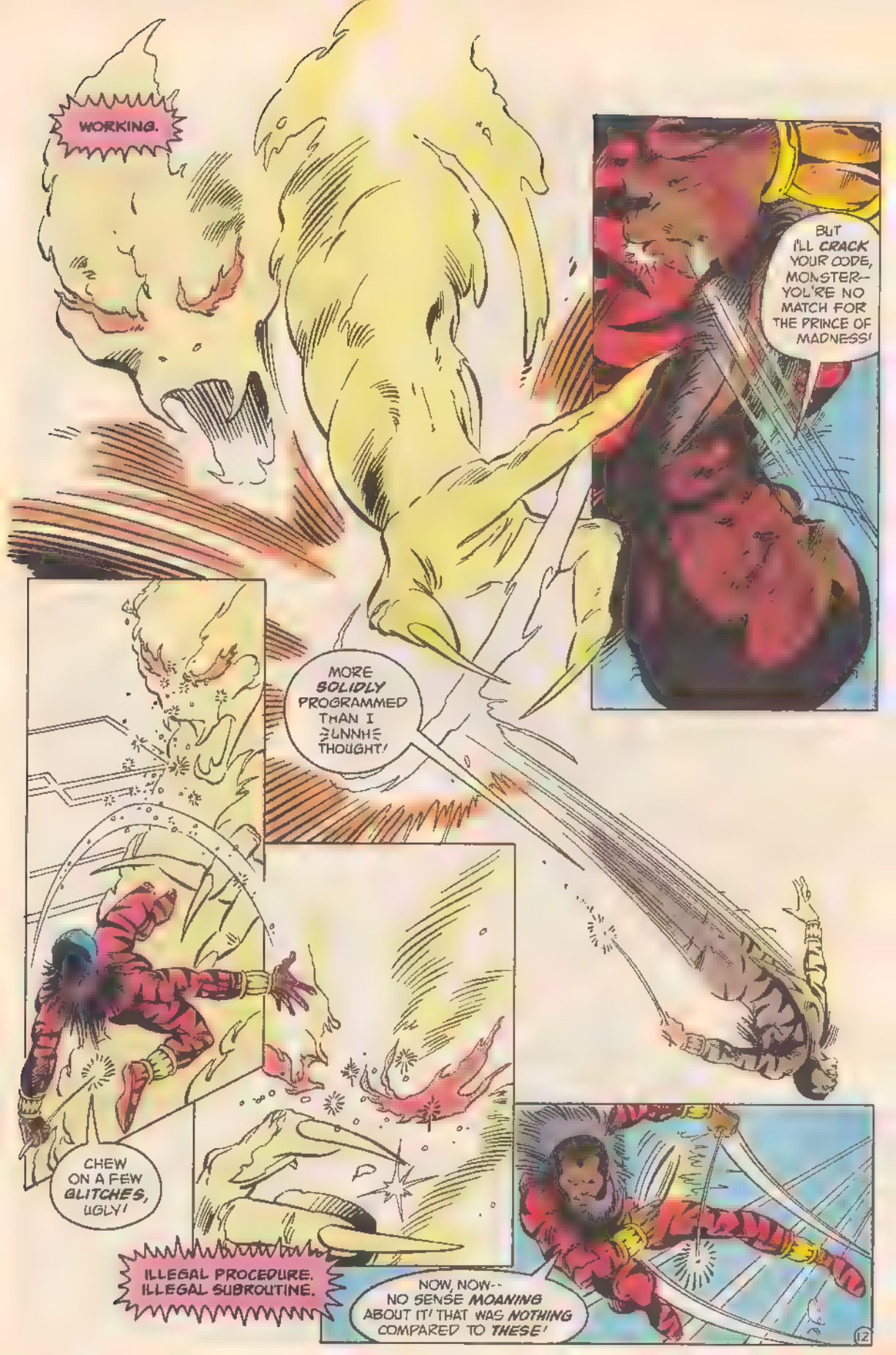
HE MAY BE A LUNATIC AND A CRIMINAL--BUT HE DID GO THROUGH THE SAME STUFF I DID! MAYBE HE UNDERSTANDS...
HEY! SPIFFY LORD CUMULUS COSTUME YOU GOT THERE!
WHERE THE HECK HAVE YOU BEEN--I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR--YOU?
WELL! LOOK NO LONGER, DREAMBOAT!
WE'LL GO GET MARRIED, SETTLE DOWN, RAISE A FAMILY, GROW OLD TOGETHER, AND THEN GO DOWN TO THE BAR FOR A COUPLE OF DRINKS, AND--WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
THOUGHT YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE. SORRY.
I CAN BE SOMEONE ELSE! I CAN--
IS IT MY BREATH? I CAN--OH, HELL.
THERE ARE NO ROMANTICS LEFT IN THE WORLD!
BUT CUMULUS DOESN'T HEAR HER DESPAIRING SHOUT--AS A FIGURE EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS TO FOLLOW HIM.
AND, MANY UNIVERSES AWAY, IN A PLANET THAT IS THE PRIVATE PRESERVE OF THE WARLORD, PANGOLIN--
I WISH YOU WEREN'T SO IMPULSIVE, LITTLE SARGON. THESE GOONS MAY DISCOVER OUR 'TRANSFER PAPERS' WERE FORGED!
YOU JUST DON'T KNOW THE ARMY, OUTRIDER--ANY ARMY. THE SOLDIER IN CHARGE WOULD RATHER HACK OFF HIS OWN FOOT THAN PROCESS ANOTHER FORM! DON'T WORRY!

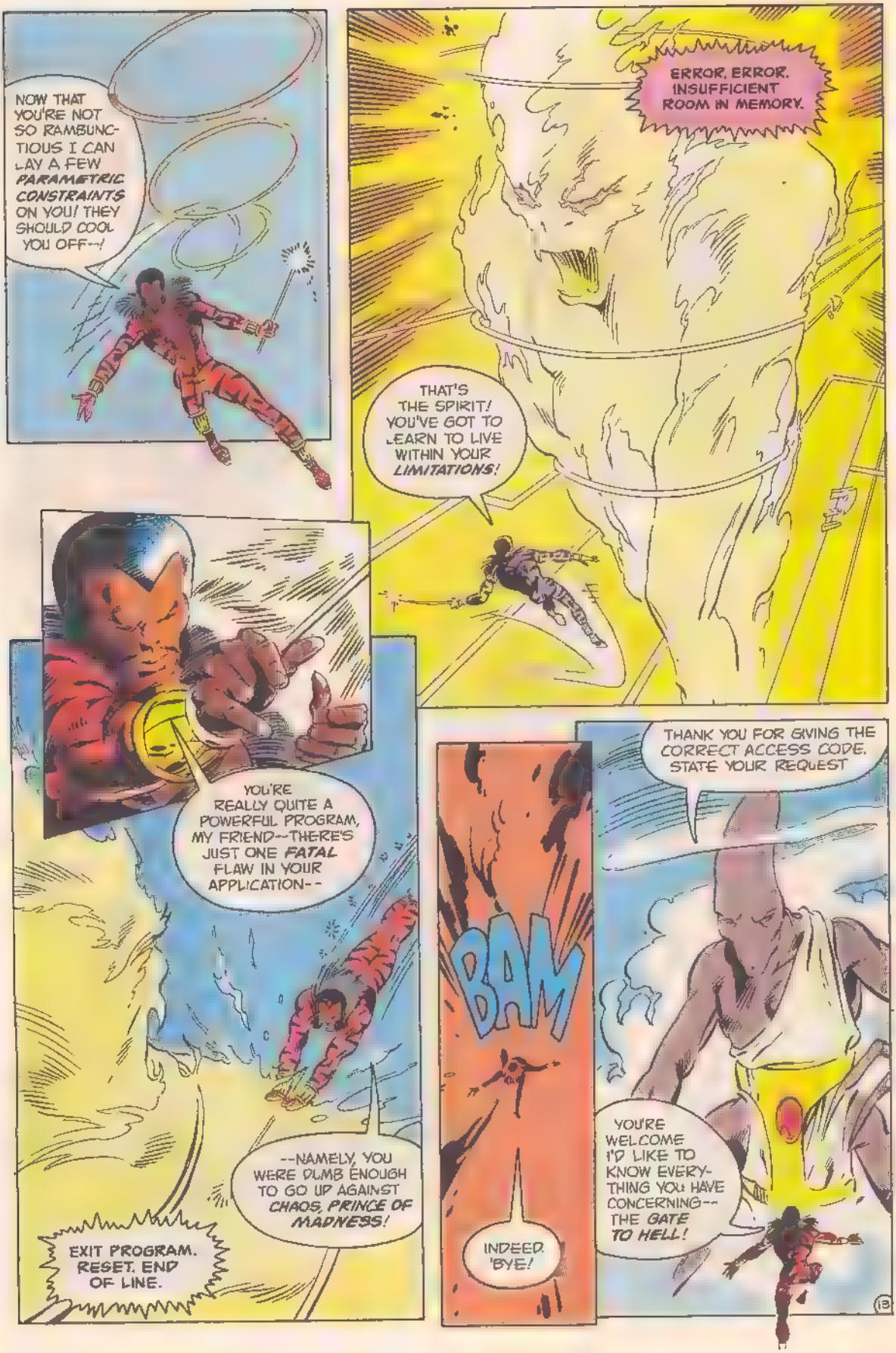
BESIDES, I WANT NO DELAY IN REGAINING MY HONOR BY TEARING PANGOLIN INTO BLOODY CHUNKS!
I--UNDER-STAND!
WELL, LITTLE SARGON, EVERYTHING IS READY. SOON YOU'LL HAVE YOUR REVENGE--AND ARCH-ANGEL HERE AND I CAN ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION.
THEN DON'T STAND AROUND--GET GOING.
MY LORD--IF YOU CALL HER 'LITTLE SARGON' AGAIN, SHE'S GOING TO TEAR YOU INTO BLOODY CHUNKS!
I KNOW, MY LADY, I KNOW.
IS THIS A PRIVATE GAME, OR CAN I JOIN IN?
DEPENDS. IS YOUR MONEY GOOD, STRANGER?
OH, IT'S MORE THAN GOOD--
AND WHILE OUTRIDER PURSUES HIS PLAN, SARGON, ONCE MISTRESS OF WAR OF FEN-RA, SKULKS THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THE TENTS LIKE THE FUGITIVE SHE NOW IS--
--DESPAIR AS WELL AS HATRED TIGHTENING HER GRIP ON HER KNIFE--
--AND SOMETHING LIKE DEATH GLINTING IN HER EYE--!
8

AND BACK IN THE CYNOSURIAN LABORATORIES OF PRINCE CHAOS--
PERFECT! WITHIN THAT CRYSTAL IS THE ONLY COMPLETE MAP OF CYNOSURE--AND IN IT ARE SECRETS THAT EVEN THE MAP-MAKERS HAVE FORGOTTEN! SECRETS THAT WILL ENABLE ME TO RULE THE MYRIAD UNIVERSES--OR, DEPENDING ON MY MOOD, UTTERLY DESTROY THEM!
STILL, KNOWING THE CWEDRIHN, THE MAP WILL BE ALMOST AS HARD TO READ AS IT WAS TO STEAL!
CLIK-IK
IN FACT, SUCH A MAP AS THIS IS NOT SO MUCH READ--
--AS EXPERIENCED! VERY GOOD! I'M NOW INSIDE THE MATRIX ITSELF!
AND NOW I'LL JUST SCROLL MYSELF UP A BIT!
9

--UNTIL I COME TO WHAT I HOPE IS --AHA!
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
THIS SECTOR IS HELLGATE FURTHER DETAILS ARE UNDER THE BAN OF THE CWEPR HN. THIS .S MAXIMUM SECURITY INFORMATION.
AND NOW LET'S SEE IF I HAVEN'T LOST MY MAGIC TOUCH WITH SECURITY SYSTEMS. FIRST, I DEPLOY MY LITTLE SYSTEMS PROBE AND--
UNLOCK THE PRECIOUS FILE!
WHOA!
ACCESS CODE ERROR. ILLEGAL ENTRY. NO ESCAPE CODE. NO RETURN CODE.


FILE WILL BE DESTROYED AND PROGRAM ERASED PERMANENTLY.
NOT BLOODY LIKELY, YOU OVERGROWN CHUNK OF SOFTWARE!

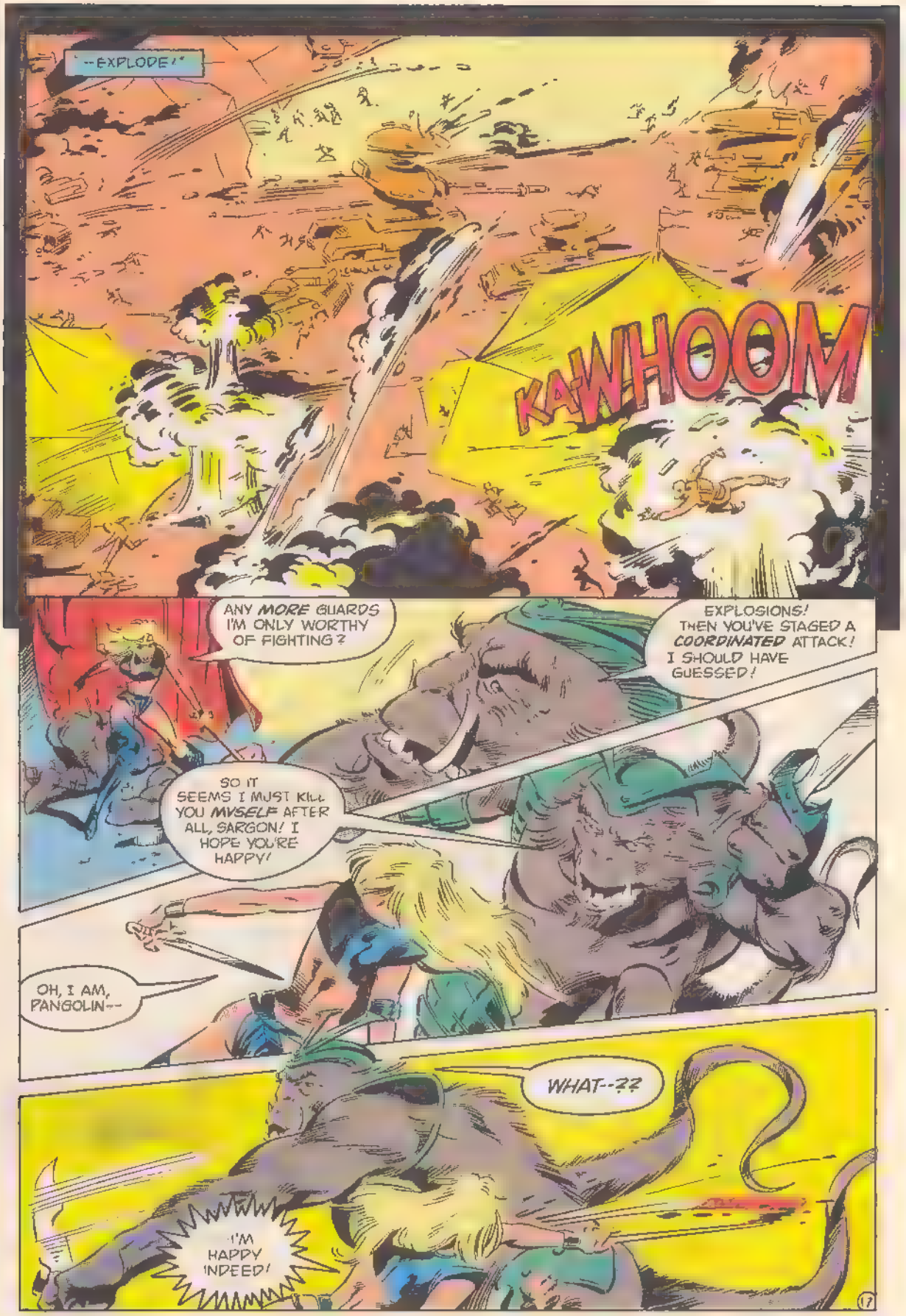

WORKING.
BUT I'LL CRACK YOUR CODE, MONSTER-- YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR THE PRINCE OF MADNESS!
MORE SOLIDLY PROGRAMMED THAN I ƎUNNHƎ THOUGHT!
CHEW ON A FEW GLITCHES, UGLY!
ILLEGAL PROCEDURE. ILLEGAL SUBROUTINE.
NOW, NOW-- NO SENSE MOANING ABOUT IT! THAT WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THESE!


NOW THAT YOU'RE NOT SO RAMBUNCTIOUS I CAN LAY A FEW PARAMETRIC CONSTRAINTS ON YOU! THEY SHOULD COOL YOU OFF--!
ERROR, ERROR. INSUFFICIENT ROOM IN MEMORY.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT! YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO LIVE WITHIN YOUR LIMITATIONS!
YOU'RE REALLY QUITE A POWERFUL PROGRAM, MY FRIEND--THERE'S JUST ONE FATAL FLAW IN YOUR APPLICATION--
--NAMELY, YOU WERE DUMB ENOUGH TO GO UP AGAINST CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS!
EXIT PROGRAM. RESET. END OF LINE.
BAM
INDEED. 'BYE!
THANK YOU FOR GIVING THE CORRECT ACCESS CODE. STATE YOUR REQUEST
YOU'RE WELCOME I'D LIKE TO KNOW EVERYTHING YOU HAVE CONCERNING-- THE GATE TO HELL!
13

AND ON PANGOLIN'S PLANET -
THERE'S HIS TENT--BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE GOT MORE GUARDS THAN THE LAST TIME I GOT IN!
NOT THAT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE--!
SAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT NUMBER, EH?
NARR, SHE'S GOT BREASTS, JUDDY. I'M TOO MUCH A REPTILE TO LIKE BREASTS.
AH, C'MON, SHOW A LITTLE TOLERANCE! I WOULDN'T THROW HER OUT O' MY BREEDING-BAG!
AND WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, LITTLE CUTIE?
I'VE BEEN SUMMONED BY HIS NIBS, B G GUY!
HEY-- THIS IS EXPIRED! WHAT'S--
--GOING-
--HOLY BEEZUS, JUDDY--
RRRR-RRIP!
THUMP!
14

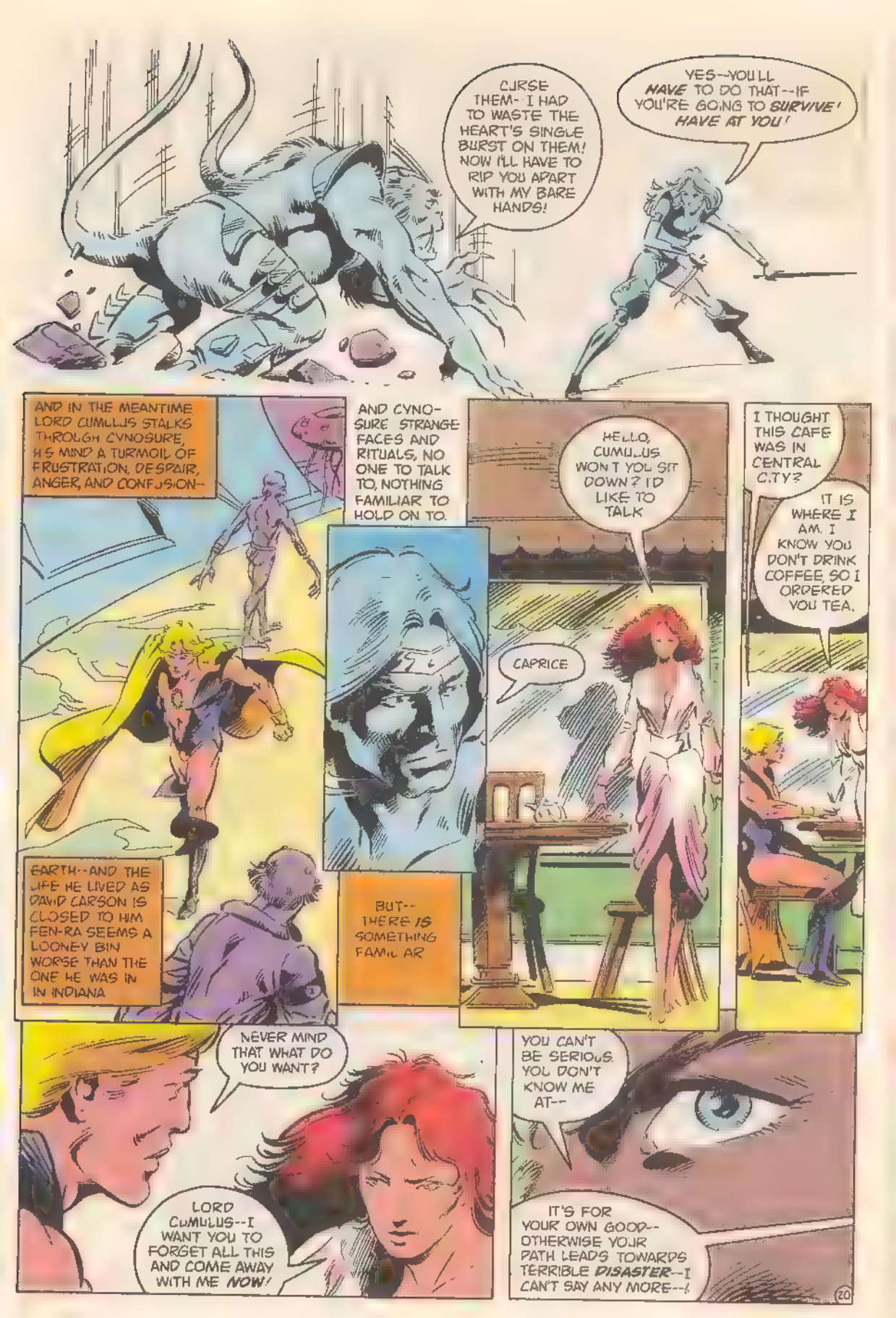
AND IN THE MEANTIME, LORD REGULUS THE OUTRIDER IS PLAYING HIS *OWN* GAME
TWO EIGHTS AND A PRIESTESS! YOU LOSE AGAIN, BUDDY!
WELL, GUYS, IT LOOKS LIKE THIS JUST ISN'T MY DAY! I'M *CLEANED OUT* UNTIL PAYDAY! SEE YOU LATER!
WELL, *HE* CERTAINLY DROPPED A BUNDLE WITHOUT GETTING RILED!
THAT'S *MY* KIND OF PLAYER! HE'S WELCOME HERE ANY TIME!
DO YOU THINK THEY *SUSPECT* ANY THING, MY LORD?
NONSENSE-- WHO SUSPECTS SOMEONE OF CHEATING IN ORDER TO *LOSE*? NOW WE'VE JUST GOT TO *SPREAD THE WEALTH* A BIT MORE BEFORE THE TIME COMES -!
THIS IS IT! NO MORE DECEPTION--NOW IT ALL DEPENDS ON STRIKING *FAST* AND *HARD*! IF I REMEMBER THE LAYOUT, PANGOLIN SHOULD BE RIGHT--

--HERE!
WHAT IN DISS NAME--?
AS I RECALL, PANGOLIN, WE LEFT SOME VITAL MATTERS UNFINISHED--
SUCH AS WHICH OF US IS GOING TO REMAIN ALIVE!
MY DEAR OBSESSED GRL YOU'RE IN THE MIDST OF THE GREATEST ARMY IN THREE UNIVERSES.
GIVE ME ONE REASON WHY I SHOULD FIGHT YOU PERSONALLY.
A SENTIENT WHO RUNS AWAY FROM A BATTLE IS WORTHY ONLY TO BE SLAUGHTERED BY MY GUARDS!
THAT'S A HINT, BOYS!
BUT AT THAT INSTANT, OUTSIDE--
IT'S TIME! GOT TO GET RID OF THE LAST OF THESE--!
HE--HE'S THROWING MONEY!
DON'T SHOVE!
OOF!
ONE SIDE I OUTRANK YER!
AND NOW--WITH ONE PRESS OF THIS BUTTON, ALL THOSE COINS MADE OUT OF UNSTABLE GOLD ISOTOPES SHOULD CONVENIENTLY--


--EXPLODE!"
KAWHOOM
ANY MORE GUARDS I'M ONLY WORTHY OF FIGHTING?
EXPLOSIONS! THEN YOU'VE STAGED A COORDINATED ATTACK! I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!
SO IT SEEMS I MUST KILL YOU MYSELF AFTER ALL, SARGON! I HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY!
OH, I AM, PANGOLIN--
WHAT--??
I'M HAPPY INDEED!

YOU WOUNDED ME, YOU FLAT FACED LITTLE--!
YES, SORRY. I MEANT TO KILL YOU!
WHEN LAST WE FOUGHT I WAS THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING BUT THE FIGHT! BUT NOW YOU HAVE MY FULL ATTENTION, WARLORD!
I NEED NO SUCH EXCUSES, GIRL! I BEAT YOU BEFORE--AND I WILL AGAIN!
WITH A MERE TAIL-THRUST I SHATTER YOUR HEADBAND!
YOU'LL FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO FOCUS YOUR MENTAL-BOLTS NOW
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT? NOBODY KNOWS THAT! ONLY--
YOU LITTLE FOOL! THINKING--TALKING INSTEAD OF FIGHTING! YOU ARE DEAD!
AND NOW--PANGOLIN CRUSHES THE LIFE FROM YOU! SAVOR THAT TASTE IN YOUR MOUTH--IT IS THE TASTE OF DEATH!

WHAT??
NO! HE'S MINE!!
NOW, MONSTER--FEEL THE MIGHT OF LORD REGULUS AND LADY CHRISEYDE OF HOLY FEN-RA--THE OUTRIDER AND THE ARCHANGEL-- AND TREMBLE!
HE WON'T TREMBLE FOR LONG, REGULUS--NOT WHEN I CRUSH HIS BONES IN MY CLAWS!
OR YOU'LL FIND I HAVE A MOST TERRIBLE SURPRISE FOR YOU!
THE HEART! HE'S WEARING THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE!!!
REGULUS!!!
LET GO OF ME-- REGULUS--
MY LADY--HE'S DYING--YOU MUST WARP HIM INTO AMNION-SPACE TO HEAL HIM-- AND NOW!
LEAVE PANGOLIN TO ME -!
19


CURSE THEM--I HAD TO WASTE THE HEART'S SINGLE BURST ON THEM! NOW I'LL HAVE TO RIP YOU APART WITH MY BARE HANDS!
YES--YOU'LL HAVE TO DO THAT--IF YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE! HAVE AT YOU!
AND IN THE MEANTIME LORD CUMULUS STALKS THROUGH CYNOSURE, HIS MIND A TURMOIL OF FRUSTRATION, DESPAIR, ANGER, AND CONFUSION--
AND CYNOSURE STRANGE FACES AND RITUALS, NO ONE TO TALK TO, NOTHING FAMILIAR TO HOLD ON TO.
HELLO, CUMULUS. WON'T YOU SIT DOWN? I'D LIKE TO TALK
CAPRICE
I THOUGHT THIS CAFE WAS IN CENTRAL CITY?
IT IS WHERE I AM. I KNOW YOU DON'T DRINK COFFEE, SO I ORDERED YOU TEA.
EARTH--AND THE LIFE HE LIVED AS DAVID CARSON IS CLOSED TO HIM. FEN-RA SEEMS A LOONEY BIN WORSE THAN THE ONE HE WAS IN IN INDIANA
BUT--THERE IS SOMETHING FAMILIAR
NEVER MIND THAT. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
LORD CUMULUS--I WANT YOU TO FORGET ALL THIS AND COME AWAY WITH ME NOW!
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. YOU DON'T KNOW ME AT--
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD--OTHERWISE YOUR PATH LEADS TOWARDS TERRIBLE DISASTER--I CAN'T SAY ANY MORE--!

THERE YOU GO AGAIN! ALL YOU COSMIC WEIRDOS!
I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHO THE HELL I AM HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DEAL WITH THE UNIVERSE AND GOD AND TERRIBLE DISASTER?
DON'T. COME AWAY WITH ME--FORGET ALL THIS--
--AND LIVE WITH ME AND BE MY LOVE-- AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU CARE TO BE
LOVE? DO YOU LOVE ME, CAPRICE?
,M - FOND OF YOU, CUMULUS
IT WAS JUST A CHANCE TO USE THE LINE FROM MARVELL. ONE DAY, THOUGH-
TAKE IT FROM ME, KID-- SHE'LL DITCH YOU WITHIN TWO CENTURIES FORGET HER
TANZ -!
WHEN I WANT YOUR ADVICE, TANZ--
--I'LL EXTRACT IT FROM YOU SURGICALLY! BUTT OUT!
BOYS--!
LORD CUMULUS--DAVID-- YOU'RE A FASCINATING MAN, AND WOULD BE A SHEER DELIGHT IF YOU STOPPED WORRYING ABOUT FATE AND IDENTITY AND SIMPLY ENJOYED ALL THAT IS AND CAN BE.
IF YOU KEEP SEARCHING FOR FIRM GROUND TO STAND ON, YOU'LL DESTROY YOURSELF BECAUSE THERE ISN'T ANY YOU'RE NOBODY--AND I'M NOBODY TOO. LET'S BE NOBODY TOGETHER.
SHE DOESN'T LOVE YOU. DITCH HER.
SHUT THE HELL UP!
CAPRICE-- CAN I TALK TO YOU LATER, AFTER I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT? HOW CAN I CALL YOU?
EASY, CUMULUS JUST WHISTLE. YOU KNOW HOW TO WHISTLE, DON'T YOU?
YOU JUST PUCKER UP-- AND BLOW.
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YOU'RE KIDDING
OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK IT ALWAYS WORKS
ALL RIGHT THEN I'LL LET YOU KNOW BEFORE TOO LONG
JUST MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT 'TOO LONG' IS, LORD CUMULUS--!
"BE NOBODY TOGETHER" IT SOUNDS ATTRACTIVE, BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN? SHE'S BEAUTIFUL-- BUT HOW CAN I BE SURE-- OF HER, OF ANY-THING? I--
--WHAT?
A WORD WITH YOU, MY LORD CUMULUS.
WHO ARE YOU?
THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT. I HAVE NEWS OF YOUR BROTHER, PRINCE CHAOS EVEN AT THIS MOMENT HE IS PLANNING A COLOSSAL DEVILTRY YOU MUST STOP HIM!
OF COURSE I'LL STOP HIM! WHERE IS HE?
FOLLOW ME, MY LORD
AND AS CUMULUS FOLLOWS THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE, THERE IS AN EAGER SMILE ON HIS FACE AND A SPRING IN HIS WALK-- AND NO THOUGHT OF CAPRICE OR HER OFFER IN HIS MIND
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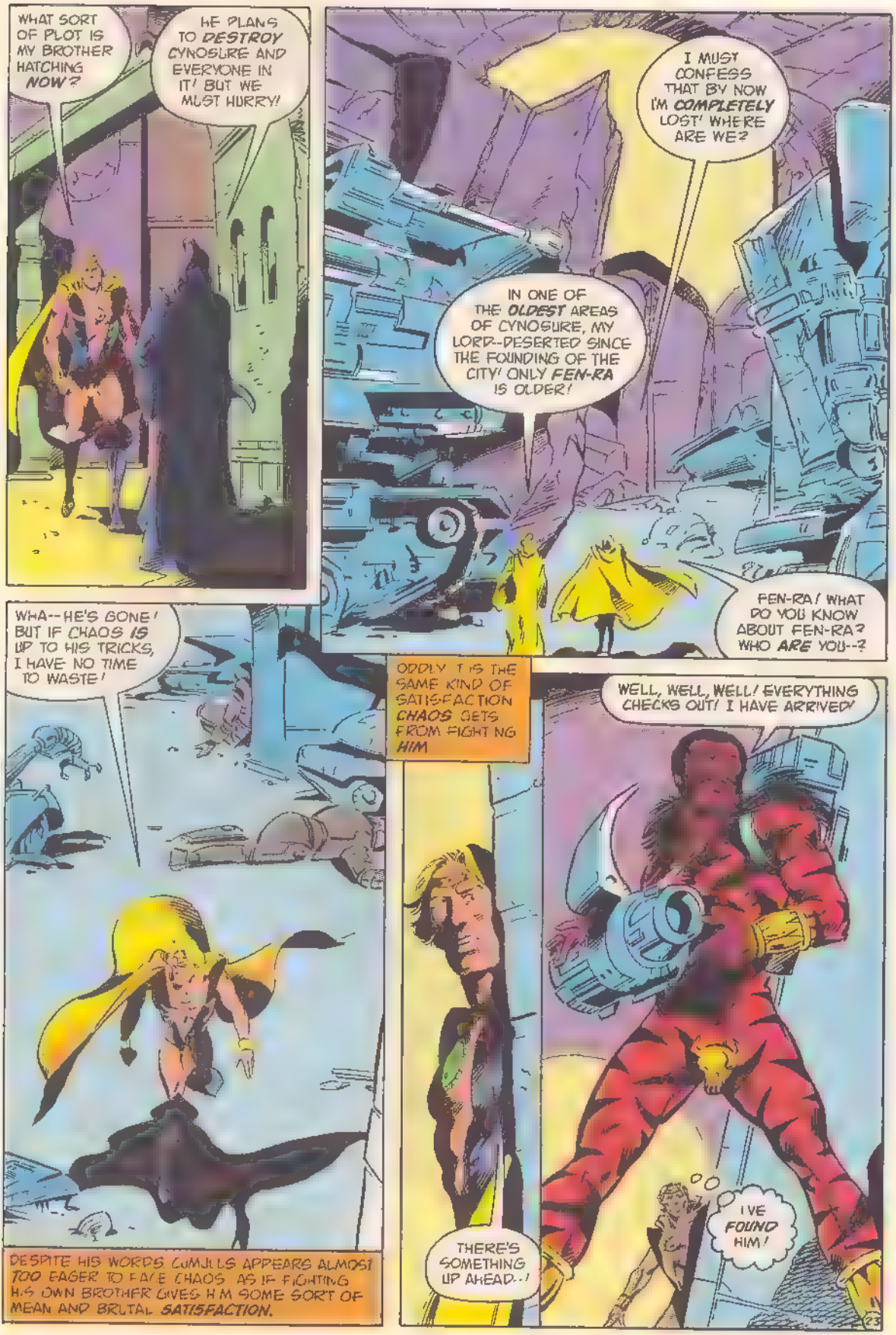
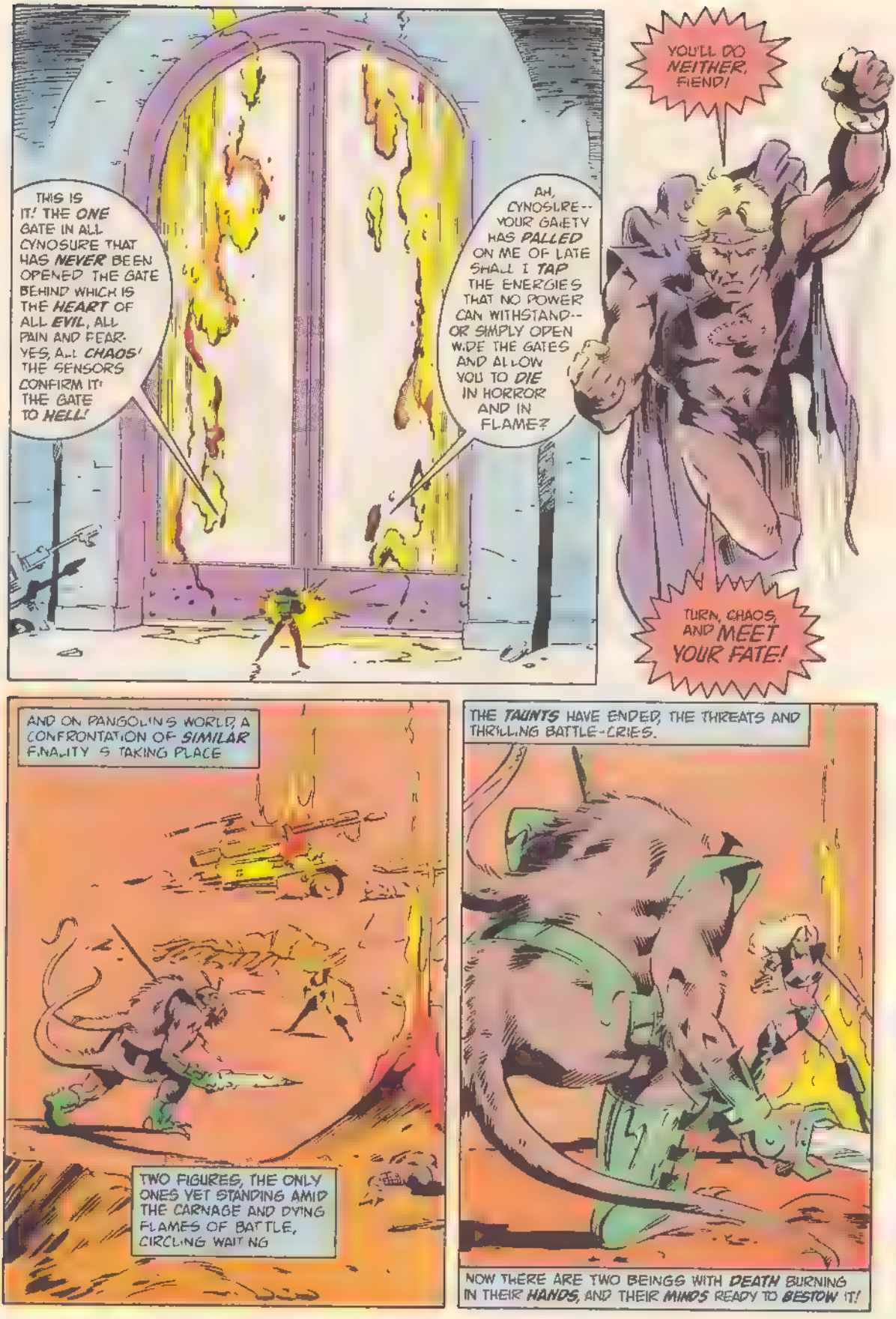
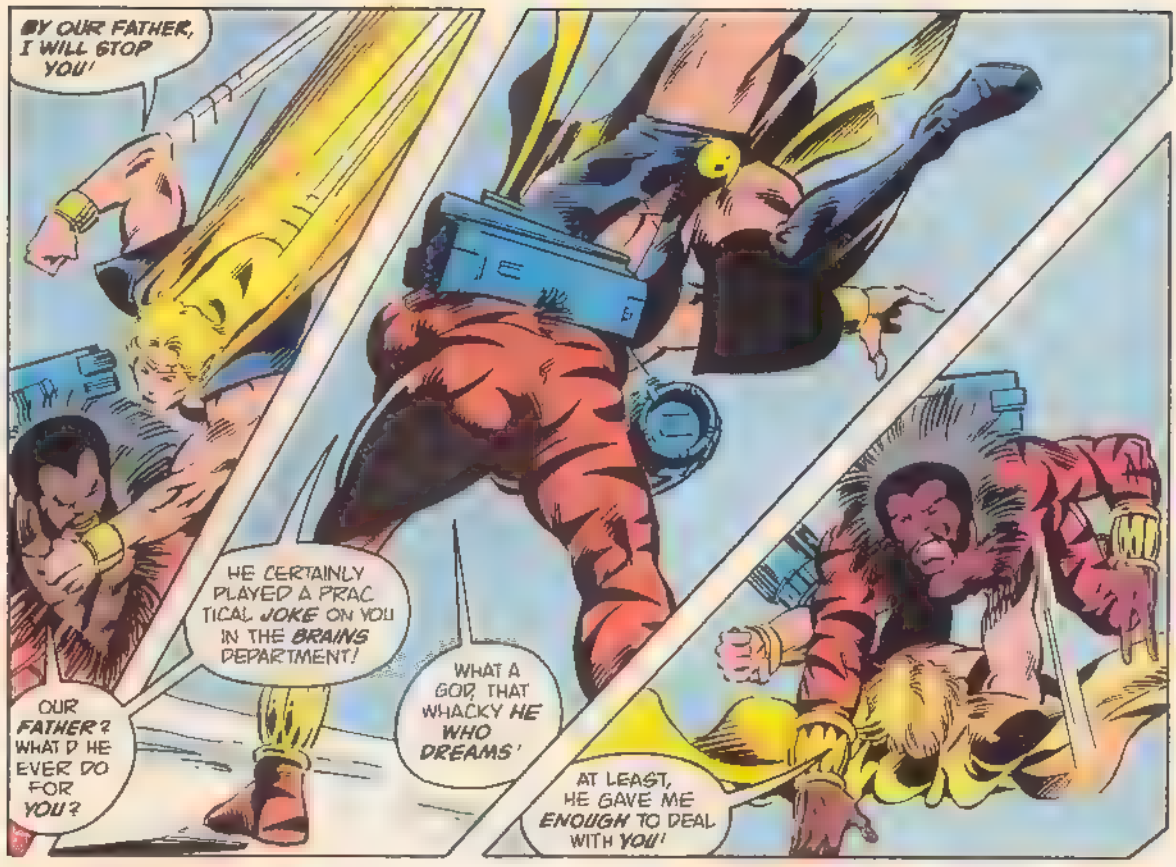
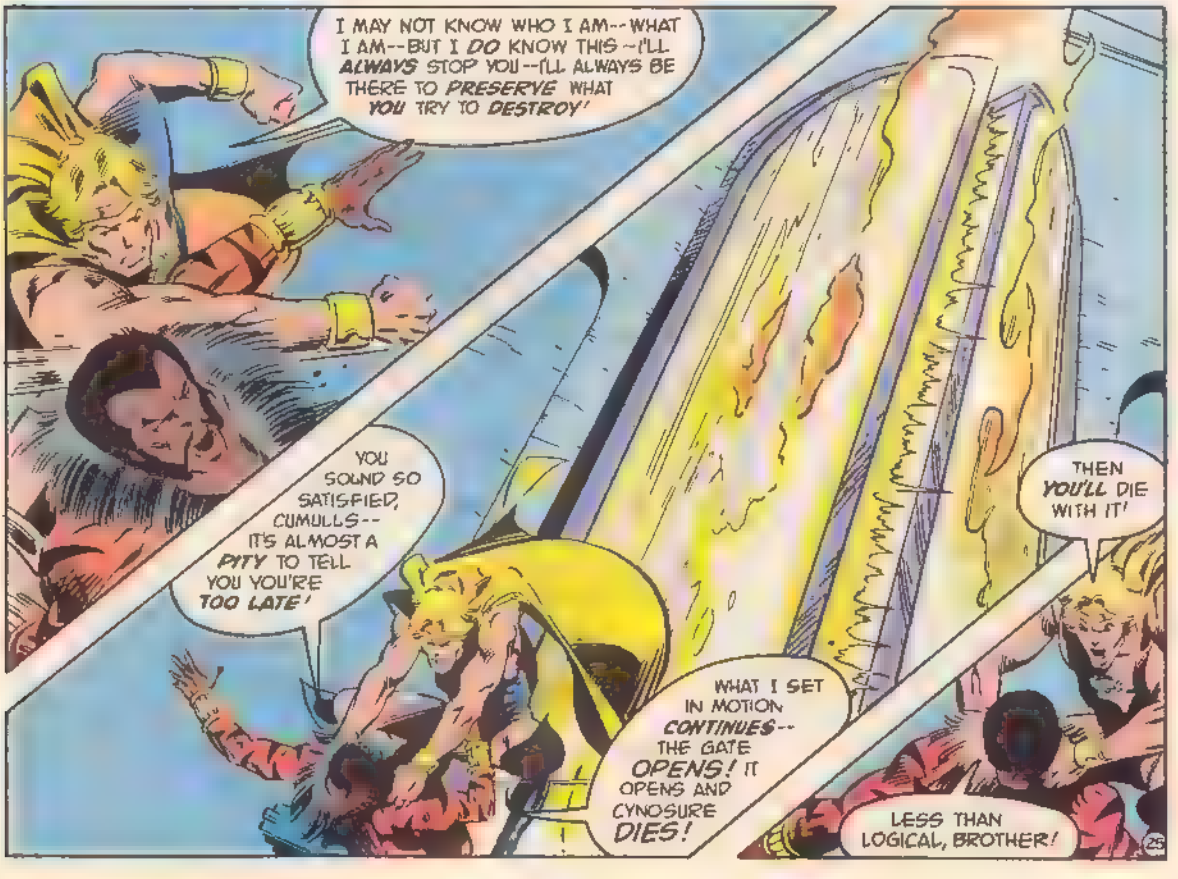
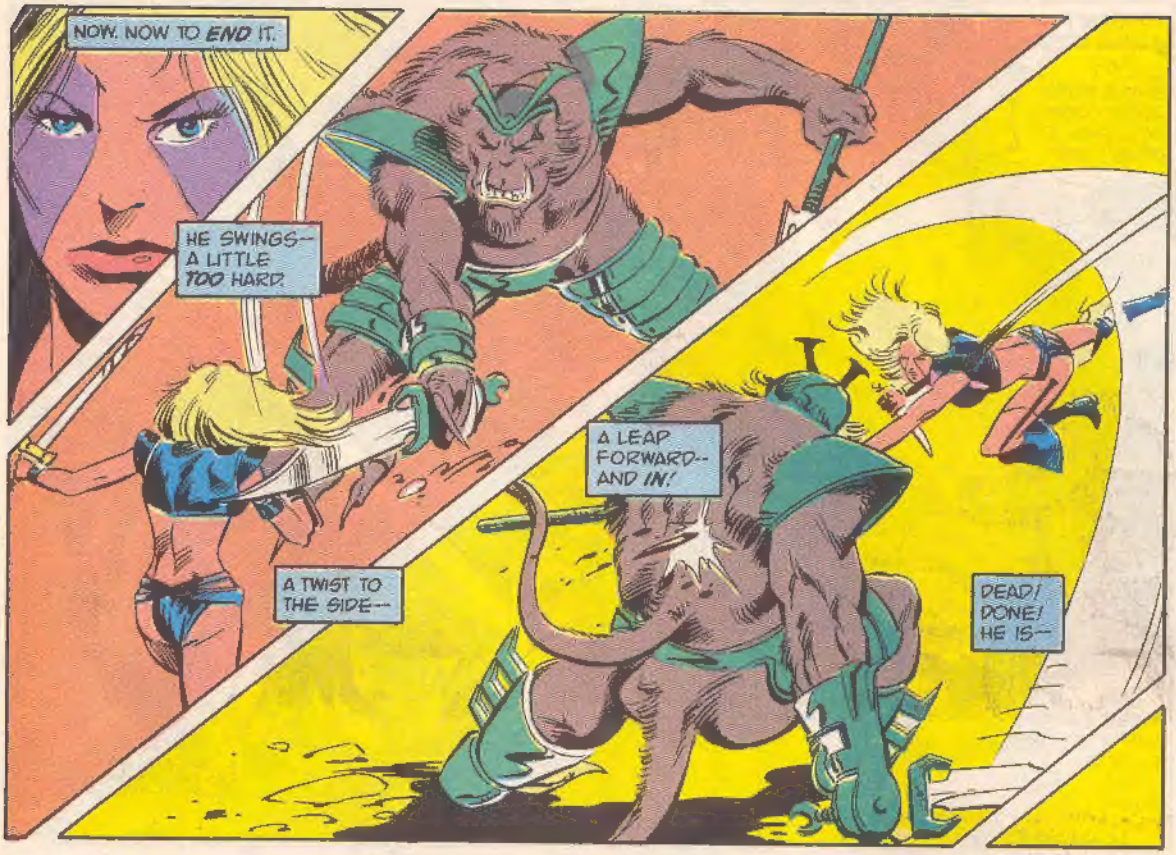
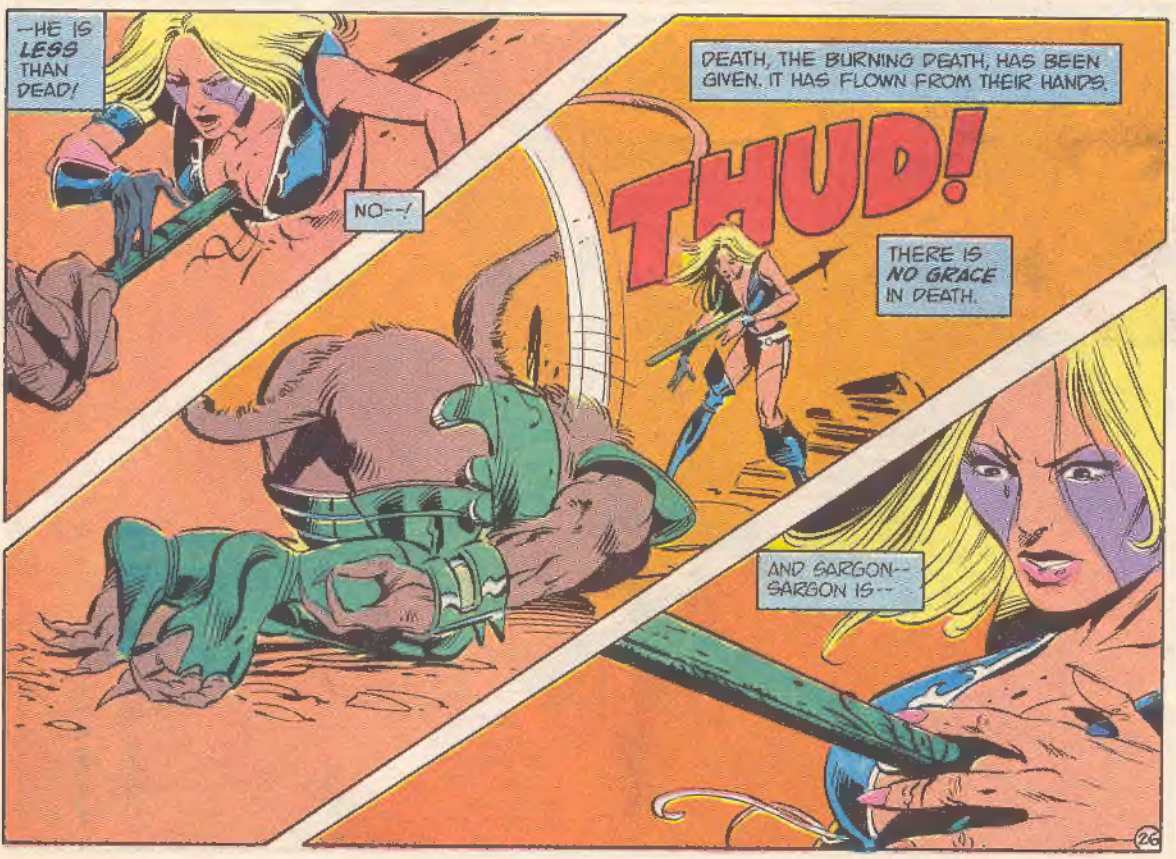

WHAT SORT OF PLOT IS MY BROTHER HATCHING NOW?
HE PLANS TO DESTROY CYNOSURE AND EVERYONE IN IT! BUT WE MUST HURRY!
I MUST CONFESS THAT BY NOW I'M COMPLETELY LOST! WHERE ARE WE?
IN ONE OF THE OLDEST AREAS OF CYNOSURE, MY LORD--DESERTED SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY! ONLY FEN-RA IS OLDER!
FEN-RA! WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT FEN-RA? WHO ARE YOU--?
WHA--HE'S GONE! BUT IF CHAOS IS UP TO HIS TRICKS, I HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE!
ODDLY, IT IS THE SAME KIND OF SATISFACTION CHAOS GETS FROM FIGHTING HIM
WELL, WELL, WELL! EVERYTHING CHECKS OUT! I HAVE ARRIVED!
DESPITE HIS WORDS, CUMULUS APPEARS ALMOST TOO EAGER TO FACE CHAOS. AS IF FIGHTING HIS OWN BROTHER GIVES HIM SOME SORT OF MEAN AND BRUTAL SATISFACTION.
THERE'S SOMETHING UP AHEAD--!
I'VE FOUND HIM!


THIS IS IT! THE ONE GATE IN ALL CYNOSURE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN OPENED THE GATE BEHIND WHICH IS THE HEART OF ALL EVIL, ALL PAIN AND FEAR. YES, ALL CHAOS! THE SENSORS CONFIRM IT: THE GATE TO HELL!
AH, CYNOSURE-- YOUR GAIETY HAS PALLED ON ME OF LATE SHALL I TAP THE ENERGIES THAT NO POWER CAN WITHSTAND-- OR SIMPLY OPEN WIDE THE GATES AND ALLOW YOU TO DIE IN HORROR AND IN FLAME?
YOU'LL DO NEITHER, FIEND!
TURN, CHAOS, AND MEET YOUR FATE!
AND ON PANSOLIN'S WORLD A CONFRONTATION OF SIMILAR FINALITY IS TAKING PLACE
TWO FIGURES, THE ONLY ONES YET STANDING AMID THE CARNAGE AND DYING FLAMES OF BATTLE, CIRCLING WAITING
THE TAUNTS HAVE ENDED, THE THREATS AND THRILLING BATTLE-CRIES.
NOW THERE ARE TWO BEINGS WITH DEATH BURNING IN THEIR HANDS, AND THEIR MINDS READY TO BESTOW IT!

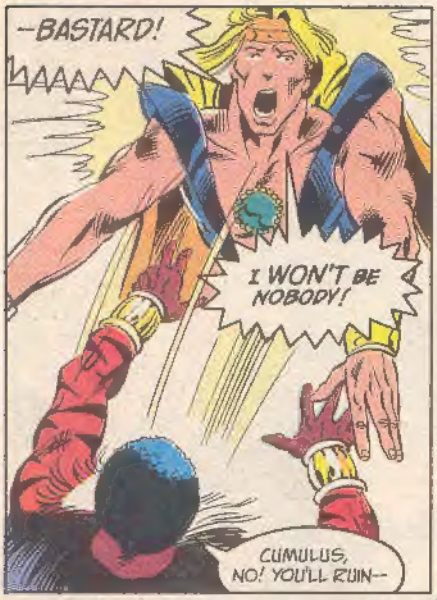

BY OUR FATHER, I WILL STOP YOU!
HE CERTAINLY PLAYED A PRAC TICAL JOKE ON YOU IN THE BRAINS DEPARTMENT!
OUR FATHER? WHAT D HE EVER DO FOR YOU?
WHAT A GOD, THAT WHACKY HE WHO DREAMS!
AT LEAST, HE GAVE ME ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH YOU!

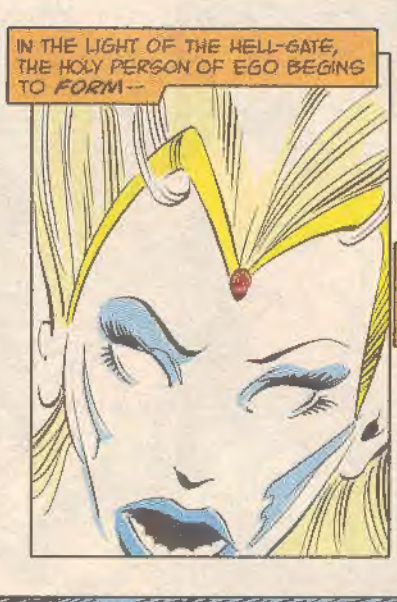

I MAY NOT KNOW WHO I AM--WHAT I AM--BUT I DO KNOW THIS--I'LL ALWAYS STOP YOU--I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE TO PRESERVE WHAT YOU TRY TO DESTROY!
YOU SOUND SO SATISFIED, CUMULUS-- IT'S ALMOST A PITY TO TELL YOU YOU'RE TOO LATE!
THEN YOU'LL DIE WITH IT!
WHAT I SET IN MOTION CONTINUES-- THE GATE OPENS! IT OPENS AND CYNOSURE DIES!
LESS THAN LOGICAL, BROTHER!


NOW. NOW TO *END* IT.
HE SWINGS-- A LITTLE *TOO* HARD.
A TWIST TO THE SIDE--
A LEAP FORWARD-- AND *IN!*
DEAD! DONE! HE IS--

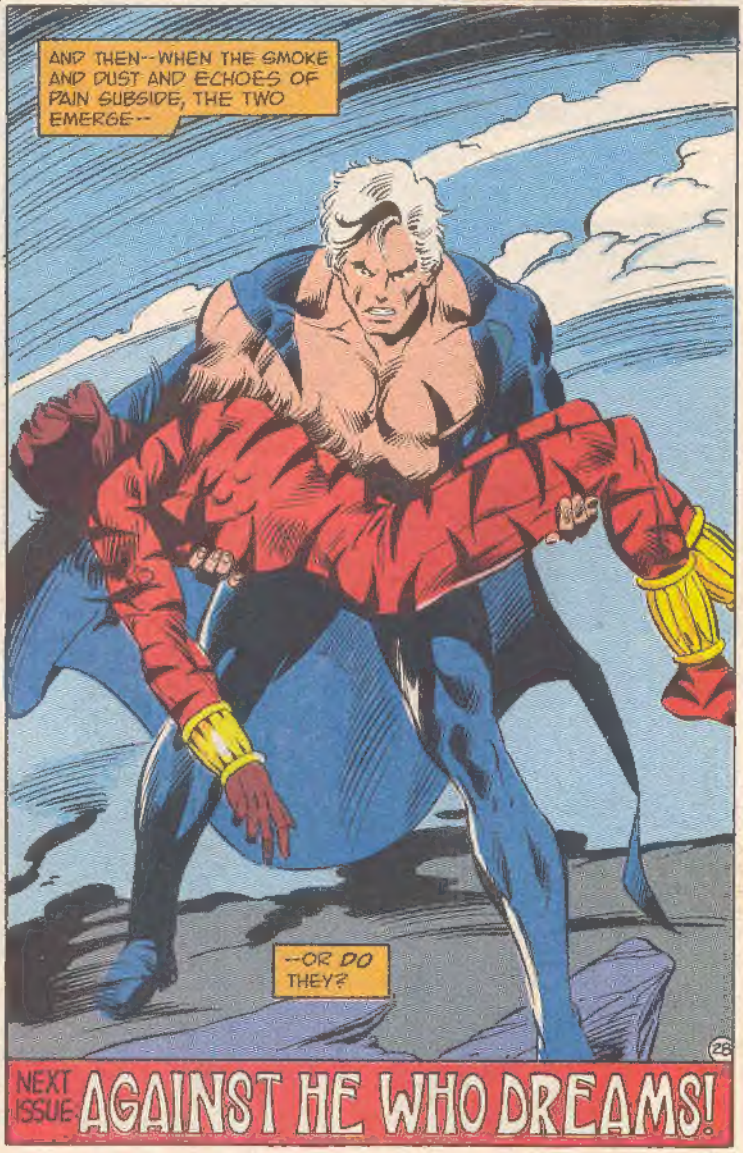

--HE IS *LESS* THAN DEAD!
NO--!
DEATH, THE BURNING DEATH, HAS BEEN GIVEN. IT HAS FLOWN FROM THEIR HANDS.
THUD!
THERE IS *NO GRACE* IN DEATH.
AND SARGON-- SARGON IS--

--DYING! DYING--!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT LOGIC! I'M GOING TO CRUSH YOU!
WILL YOU-- BROTHER? I'LL BET YOU A GOOD DINNER YOU WON'T!
I WILL! I WILL!
--DYING--! CUMULUS-- YOU MUST COME-- HELP ME!
WITHOUT YOU, CUMULUS-- MY LOVE-- I DIE!
SARGON-- HOW CAN I-- I CANNOT DESERT--
SARGON-- NO! I CAN'T-- YOU CAN'T ASK THAT!
YOU HESITATE--MY BOY, YOU'LL NEVER GET AHEAD THAT WAY! IT'S A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD!
IF YOU HESITATE, YOUR COMPETITORS WILL JUST DO-- THIS!
CHAOS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DOING? WHY I'M CAUSING US TO FUSE-- TO FORM OUR DEAR LITTLE SISTER EGO!
AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF YOUR PURPOSE-- YOUR IDENTITY! WE WILL BE ONE--AND NOTHING! NOBODY!
CHAOS-- YOU--


--BASTARD!
I WON'T BE NOBODY!
CUMULUS, NO! YOU'LL RUIN--


IN THE LIGHT OF THE HELL-GATE, THE HOLY PERSON OF EGO BEGINS TO FORM--
--AND THEN IS RIPPED ASUNDER!
EGO SCREAMS!

AND THE CHAMBER EXPLODES WITH LIGHT, DROWNING OUT THE HELL-GLARE--THE GATES, THE WALLS SHUDDER AND COLLAPSE, CYNOSURE TREMBLES--
--AND THE HEART OF THE AGONY ROARS AROUND THE TWO FIGURES AS ALL AROUND THEM IS DESTROYED!


AND THEN--WHEN THE SMOKE AND DUST AND ECHOES OF PAIN SUBSIDE, THE TWO EMERGE--
--OR DO THEY?
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NEXT ISSUE AGAINST HE WHO DREAMS!

FIRST NOTES

DATA IN ACTION

Several months ago, we asked you folks to fill out a survey so we would know a little bit about you — who you are, what you like, that sort of thing. We received a whole lot of responses; in fact, we received more than twice as many as we anticipated. So the first thing we learned was not to sell you guys short.

Somewhat more recently, we published some of the results of this survey. Now you know what we know.

So what? What good is all that knowledge if nobody acts on it?

Well, next month we're releasing the first comic book influenced by that survey — just to prove we're paying attention. And all this provides a convenient segue into a sincere new comic hype.

Perhaps the one piece of information that surprised me the most was the large number of people who wanted to see a detective comic book. I guess I shouldn't be that surprised, as **Ms. Tree** has been quite successful for several years now. But since there wasn't a serious attempt to follow Ms. Tree's success, I guess I failed to see what was right in front of me all the time.

Well, for a long time now, Ms. Tree writer **Max Collins** and artist **Terry Beatty** have been talking with **Joe Staton** about doing something together. What, nobody knew for sure. Then I saw the survey results.

The proverbial light bulb went off over my head (and it's a damn shame comics artists don't do effects like that any more). Let's do — tah dah! — a limited series. Or a mini-series. Or whatever you want to call it.

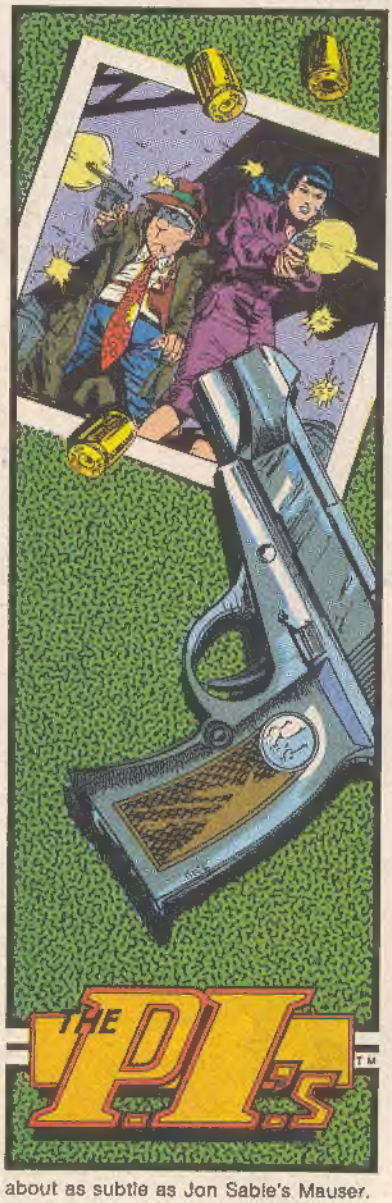
And let's team up detective Michael Mauser with Ms. Tree. Let's get Collins to write, Staton to pencil, and Beatty to ink. Sort of beauty teaming up with the beast, all in the context of a solid detective thriller.

And Collins is a natural; author of thirteen detective thrillers with two more in the can, Max is the guy the newspapers turned to when Chester Gould stopped writing Dick Tracy. The guy knows his stuff — and Ms. Tree has been in print longer than the oldest First Comics title.

Everybody was real excited; we plotted the story out and found it to work in three chapters (as opposed to deciding to do a four or a twelve issue series and then padding the story to fit the format), and we scheduled it for September.

One problem arose: how do we get **Joe Staton** to pencil this detective thriller while writing and penciling **E-Man** and serving as First's art director? Simple: we clone him. Unfortunately, Hilarie Staton, Joe's wife, found that prospect confusing, so we decided to alternate E-Man with the Mauser/Tree series.

Then I get the call from **Mike Grell**. "You know, Mike," Mike tells me, "I really enjoyed drawing that tribute to Mickey Spillane back in Ms. Tree #7." Grell is



about as subtle as Jon Sable's Mauser. "So, I was thinking, if you're going to do a Mike Mauser/Ms. Tree mini-limited, how about . . ."

So **Mike Grell** is going to do three more tributes to Mickey Spillane, starting off with a private detective known as Mike Hammer.

Hmmm . . . Michael Mauser, private investigator. Ms. Tree, private investigator. Mike Hammer, private investigator. "Let's call this series (tah-dah!) **The P.I.'s!**" What a natural!

So **The P.I.s** number one, by **Max Collins, Joe Staton,** and **Terry Beatty** — with a two-page mini-poster by **Mike Grell** — premieres next month.

And now you know how top-level management decisions are made.

— Mike Gold

FIRST IN AUGUST

American Flagg! #15 — **Howard Chaykin's** back on full script-and-art, and he's taken Reuben and Luther to the wilds of Western Canada for "Northern Lights, Double Cross!" And while he's at it, Chaykin's started up the American Flagg! dossier!

E-Man #21 — Who is the Golden Gopher? What is the B-Team? Will Teddy-Q be forced to get a Mohawk hair-do? And how did E-Man get mixed up in the biggest shootout since Stephen Cannell's latest TV pilot? **Joe Staton** will tell us in this exciting issue!

Grimjack #5 — John Gaunt rides The Eternity Road and discovers the only law in the Cynosurian outback: Jericho Noleskil! **John Ostrander** and **Timothy Truman** start a new multi-parter. And, in Munden's Bar, Truman makes his debut as a writer as he teams up with artist **Joe Staton** for the secret origin of . . . Bob the Watch Lizard!

Jon Sable, Freelance #19 — Sable's back in Africa only to find himself caught up in a deadly manhunt . . . with Jon Sable as "The Prey!" **Mike Grell** provides cover-to-cover thrills.

Starslayer #23 — **Ostrander, Truman,** and **Hilary Barta** bring us the Golden Moby and . . . the beginning of time! And the Black Flame is caught up in the ultimate confrontation with the Nightmare Lord, courtesy of **Peter Gillis** and **Don Lomax!**

WARP #18: Chaos finally makes one shady deal too many, and the end result could have a cataclysmic effect on both the Prince of Madness and his brother Cumulus! **Peter Gillis,** script; **Jerry Bingham,** pencils; and **Mike Gustovich,** inks.